

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 00750 01 OF 02 271633Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 452
INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 0750

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, TU, CY

REF: ANKARA 0747

1. FOLLOWING IS ACTUAL TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW ON WHICH
NEWSPAPER STORIES IN REFTEL WAS BASED.

QUOTE:

QUESTION: DO YOU, YOUR EXCELLENCY, PERCEIVE ANY
DIFFERENCE IN THE APPROACHES OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT
AND THE PAST GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE TURKISH-AMERICAN
RELATIONS IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE MUTUAL
DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT?

SPIERS: I THINK BOTH OF THEM WANT AN IMPROVEMENT IN
TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND BOTH OF THEM WERE INTERESTED
OR ARE INTERESTED IN RE-ESTABLISHING CLOSE COOPERATION IN
THE MILITARY FIELD. NO, FROM THAT STANDPOINT, I DON'T
REALLY SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. I DO
SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN OTHER
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 00750 01 OF 02 271633Z

AREAS OF FOREIGN POLICY BUT NOT IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR
ATTITUDES ABOUT TURKISH RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

QUESTION: I'LL PUT IT THIS WAY. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT
TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS WILL BE RESTORED TO A MORE
FIRM FOUNDATION THROUGH THE PRESENT POLICIES, ATTITUDES
OF THIS GOVERNMENT?

SPIERS: I THINK UNFORTUNATELY TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

HAD GOTTEN MIXED UP WITH THE CYPRUS QUESTION. I SAY UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE I DON'T THINK THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN MIXED UP MYSELF. THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD GENERALLY TAKEN THE POSITION THAT IT WASN'T POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS ON CYPRUS UNLESS AND UNTIL THE EMBARGO WAS REMOVED. THAT'S NOT THE POSITION THAT THIS GOVERNMENT TAKES; SINCE THE POSITION OUR CONGRESS IS TAKING IS THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO REMOVE THE EMBARGO

UNTIL THERE IS PROGRESS ON CYPRUS YOU HAVE A CLEAR IMPASSE BETWEEN THE TWO POINTS OF VIEW. IF I UNDERSTAND ECEVIT'S POLICY CORRECTLY, HE DISASSOCIATED THESE TWO ELEMENTS OF CYPRUS AND THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HIS POSITION IS THAT PROGRESS ON CYPRUS IS SOMETHING THAT HE WANTS TO ACHIEVE FOR INDEPENDENT REASONS OF TURKISH NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND MOVEMENT ON CYPRUS IS NOT PRE-CONDITIONED ON WHAT WE DO ON OUR DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP. SINCE THAT MEANS TURKISH INITIATIVES ON CYPRUS, MY IMPRESSION, MORE THAN AN IMPRESSION, MY BELIEF IS IT WOULD EASE THE SITUATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS IN TAKING THOSE ACTIONS THAT I THINK ARE NECESSARY TO THE RESTORATION OF A SOUND U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP.

QUESTION: IN YOUR PERSONAL OPINION, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OR WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM THAT SHADOWS THOSE RELATIONS OR THAT SHADOWED THE RELATIONS UNTIL NOW?

SPIERS: I THINK IT IS THE RELATIONSHIP IN THE MILITARY FIELD, I THINK IT IS THE EMBARGO, I THINK THAT THE EMBARGO

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 00750 01 OF 02 271633Z

DOESN'T SERVE ANY AMERICAN INTEREST, IT DOESN'T SERVE ANY TURKISH INTEREST, IT DOESN'T SERVE ANY NATO INTEREST, I DON'T THINK IT EVEN SERVES ANY GREEK INTEREST IN THE LONG RUN. BUT IT'S A POLITICAL FACT OF LIFE THAT IT EXISTS AND A CONNECTION HAS BEEN MADE IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, WHICH IS AN INDEPENDENT BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT, BETWEEN THESE TWO ISSUES. THAT'S A FACT THAT ANY ADMINISTRATION HAS TO LIVE WITH. MY HOPE IS THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, BUT OUR ABILITY TO DO SO IS NOT A FOREGONE CONCLUSION. UNTIL THIS ISSUE IS REMOVED, OUR RELATIONSHIP WILL NOT IMPROVE.

QUESTION: YOU REMEMBER BOTH DEFENSE MINISTER ISIK AND ECEVIT HIMSELF HAVE REQUESTED THE UNITED STATES TO REMAIN EQUIDISTANT FROM BOTH TURKEY AND GREECE IN THE DISPUTES. DO YOU THINK IF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ADOPTS SUCH A STAND IT WOULD SERVE THE TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS ON ONE HAND AND THE TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS ON THE OTHER?

SPIERS: LET ME TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. I THINK MANY TURKS SPEAK AND ACT AS IF THE UNITED STATES HAS NO LEGITIMATE INTEREST

IN CONNECTION WITH CYPRUS. THAT'S SOMETHING I DO NOT BELIEVE IS THE CASE. CONTINUATION OF THE DISPUTE ON DYPRUS AFFECTS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TWO OF OUR ALLIES, HAS A SECONDARY EFFECT ON THE COHESION AND STRENGTH OF THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF NATO. IT'S A TURBULENT ISSUE IN CYPRUS ITSELF, AND CYPRUS, IN OUR VIEW, IS AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT, ONE WITH WHOM WE HAVE NORMAL AND FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THINGS STRAIGHTENED OUT, SO THE UNITED STATES DOES HAVE A NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE SOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE UNITED STATES ALSO BELIEVES THAT IF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM CAN BE RESOLVED BY THE COUNTRIES MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED, THE TWO COMMUNITIES IN CYPRUS AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 ANKARA 00750 01 OF 02 271633Z

GREECE AND TURKEY, WE COULD DO NOTHING BUT APPLAUD.

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 00750 02 OF 02 271647Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 ANKARA 0750

WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT REASON TO GET INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE. ALL WE WOULD LIKE TO DO IS TO HAVE THE ISSUE RESOLVED. IF IT NOW APPEARS THAT BECAUSE OF THE

ACTIVITIES OF THE PARTIES MOST CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE ISSUE IT CAN BE RESOLVED, THEN THERE IS NO REASON FOR THE UNITED STATES TO DO ANYTHING BUT REMAIN DISTANT FROM THE PROBLEM. NOW, OBVIOUSLY, GREECE AND TURKEY, ARE TWO ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES, TWO COUNTRIES WITH WHICH WE WANT TO MAINTAIN CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS. WE DON'T REGARD IT AS NECESSARY TO MAKE CHOICES BETWEEN THE TWO AND WE HOPE THAT IT NEVER COMES TO THAT; IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE IDEA OF FOLLOWING A POLICY OF EQUI-DISTANCE AS YOU PUT IT, IS ESSENTIALLY FOLLOWING A POLICY THAT TRIES TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BOTH GOVERNMENTS AND I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT WANT TO SEE US SIDING WITH ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. NOW, MANY TURKS WILL SAY THAT THE EMBARGO IS TAKING SIDES, IS TAKING SIDES ON BEHALF OF GREECE AND AGAINST TURKEY. TO A CERTAIN EXTENT THAT'S CORRECT. BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 00750 02 OF 02 271647Z

THE EMBARGO HAS A COMPLICATED HISTORY, AND I THINK, ALSO, TOO MANY TURKS TAKE A BLACK AND WHITE VIEW OF THE ISSUE. THE EMBARGO WAS IMPOSED BECAUSE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES WAS VIOLATED. UNITED STATES LAW REQUIRES THAT ARMS PROVIDED BE USED FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES. IN THE CASE OF TURKEY, THEY WERE PROVIDED FOR NATO PURPOSES. WHEN TURKEY USED THEM FOR OTHER PURPOSES, THE ADMINISTRATION TRIED TO IGNORE THIS. BUT THE CONGRESS--AND PART OF THIS WAS AN ISSUE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH--ACTED ON ITS OWN IN THAT CASE. AS AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT, I AM IN FAVOR OF ABIDING BY UNITED STATES LAW, ALTHOUGH I THINK IN THIS CASE APPLICATION OF THE LAW WAS UNPRODUCTIVE. FOLLOWING THIS POLICY WAS, I THINK, AGAINST OUR NATIONAL INTEREST; IT WAS BASED IN PART ON THE MISTAKEN ASSUMPTION THAT THIS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A SOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM, THAT THE EMBARGO WOULD PROVIDE SOME KIND OF PRESSURE FOR A CYPRUS SOLUTION. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE CASE, I DON'T BELIEVE IT EVER HAS BEEN THE CASE, I DON'T BELIEVE IT EVER WOULD BE THE CASE. THE TURKS ARE VERY MUCH LIKE AMERICANS; THEY REACT AGAINST SUCH ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE PRESSURE THE SAME WAY THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD IF THE SITUATION WERE REVERSED. SO THAT I WOULD QUARREL WITH ANYBODY WHO SAYS THE EMBARGO HELPS ACHIEVE A CYPRUS SOLUTION. IF ANYTHING, IT TENDS TO BE JUST THE OPPOSITE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, I ALSO HAVE TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE THAT WHEN THE UNITED STATES PROVIDES WEAPONS TO ANOTHER COUNTRY THEY OUGHT TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THEY WERE PROVIDED. THEY ARE NOT A BLANK CHECK. IT IS A VERY DIFFICULT INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM. THERE IS NO EASY BLACK AND WHITE ANSWER TO IT. WITHOUT CHANGING THE LAW I WOULD LIKE TO FIND SOME WAY AROUND IT, I HOPE THAT SOME WAY AROUND THE

PROBLEM WILL BE FOUND IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, AND
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PAGE 03 ANKARA 00750 02 OF 02 271647Z

IF PROGRESS IS MADE ON CYPRUS BECAUSE OF THE INDEPENDENT DESIRABILITY
OF SUCH PROGRESS, IT IS GOING TO HELP THE ADMINISTRATION IN
ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVE--AND ITS OBJECTIVE IS CLEARLY
THE RESTORATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF OUR POLITICAL,
ECONOMIC AND SECURITY TIES WITH TURKEY. THE EMBARGO
CLEARLY OPERATES AS AN OBSTACLE TO THAT.

QUESTION: AND HERE COMES THE QUESTION THAT WHETHER
THE EMBARGO WILL BE LIFTED SOON AFTER ECEVIT'S
COMMUNICATED THE ISSUE IN CYPRUS AFTER THE TALKS WITH
SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE.

SPIERS: MR. VANCE COMMUNICATED TO MR. ECEVIT HIS
EXPECTATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THIS ISSUE AND, VERY
FRANKLY, I DON'T FEEL AT LIBERTY TO CONFIRM WHAT HE
SAID, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF SPECULATIONS
ABOUT THIS IN THE PRESS, A LOT OF STATEMENTS, BUT THE
CONFIRMATION OF THAT WILL HAVE TO COME FROM SOME OTHER
SOURCE, ALL I CAN DO IS SAY THAT I EXPRESS THE HOPE
THAT WE CAN GET RID OF THIS BURDEN OF THE EMBARGO
SOMETIME IN THE SPRING. I CAN'T GUARANTEE IT. IT
INVOLVES MANY, MANY, COMPLICATED INTERRELATIONSHIPS IN
AMERICAN POLITICS; IT INVOLVES QUESTIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE CONGRESSIONAL
BRANCH; IT INVOLVES OTHER ISSUES WHICH ARE UP: THE
PANAMA CANAL, THE ENERGY PROGRAM, TAX REFORM,
WELFARE REFORM. ALL OF THESE INVOLVE VERY COMPLICATED
POLITICAL ISSUES AND POLITICAL JUDGMENTS. THEY COULD
HAVE AN EFFECT ON THIS ISSUE. SO, I CAN'T PREDICT WHAT
WILL BE THE OUTCOME. MY ONLY HOPE IS THAT SANITY WILL
PREVAIL AND IT WILL BE REMOVED. UNQUOTE.

2. PART 2 OF INTERVIEW FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
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